



4-H Youth Development

2000 Programs of Excellence

School-Age Child Care

National School-age Care Alliance Accreditation Through 4-H *North Carolina*

Situation

School-age child care in North Carolina is unregulated unless it is housed in a child care center or the program voluntarily chooses to be licensed. The quality of care is often poor to mediocre. Even in licensed programs, the quality of care can be improved. Families and community leaders become involved through a team that is formed at each program to support the accreditation process. Benefits of accreditation include quality assurance for the children, families, and sponsoring agencies and increased usage of quality school-age care programs.

Since January of 1997, grants in the amount of \$10,000 - \$15,000 each have been awarded yearly to counties to improve school-age care quality through national accreditation. These grants are provided by 4-H Youth Development, North Carolina State University through the federal Child Care Development Fund administered in North Carolina through the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Child Development. Twelve counties have been involved in this project. Each 4-H Agent hired a person half time to become the advisor for the programs. Training is provided by the state 4-H staff for the 4-H Agents, their staff, and the program staff on the NSACA Standards for quality school-age care. A mentor relationship is established for the program with the county 4-H staff as well as with the 4-H state staff. Site visits by the mentors provides personal contact which allows for recommendations to help improve the quality of the programming.

Program Description

Using the National School-Age Care Alliance's (NSACA) National Accreditation process, the 4-H School-Age Care Project in North Carolina has assisted 38 school-age child care

programs to improve the quality of their programs to reach the standards required for national accreditation.

Accomplishments and Impacts

Of the 38 programs that began this process, 10 have received accreditation, 16 are still in the process of applying for accreditation, 3 programs have been deferred, and 9 programs withdrew from the project citing high staff turnover or a lack of administrative support. All the programs involved in this project have stated that their quality has been much improved in the areas of human relationships, activities, indoor and outdoor environments, safety, health and nutrition, and administration. Kyle Williams, child care center owner, from Buxton, NC states, "Our accreditation process has been a wonderful experience...a real time for growth. Our families really value school-age care."

Collaborators

County 4-H Agents/Offices, Public schools, Y's, Boys and Girls Clubs, churches, private centers, parks and recreation departments, various retail businesses in the counties, parents.

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4-H Share/Care Program

New Mexico

Situation

Children deserve a caring adult role model that can teach and guide them. Yet, too many New Mexico children lack adequate adult supervision and guidance. Factors continue to complicate the lives of many New Mexico children. In 1999, 31 percent of New Mexico youth were living in poverty, 43 percent were born to unwed mothers and belong to families with more children and fewer adults in the home. These statistics lead to a tremendous vulnerability among New Mexico's youth, particularly during unsupervised out of school time. Studies demonstrate that unsupervised free time among youth is a strong variable for increased delinquency and substance abuse.

Program Description

4-H Share/Care (Sharing Our Expertise As We Care for Our Youth) After School Program sites are in some of the most economically and socially deprived neighborhoods in the state. Almost one third of New Mexico counties were involved in 4-H

after school programming in 1999-2000. Each site offers customized programming based on community needs, infrastructure, partnership capacity building and advisory committee recommendations. Substance abuse prevention education is a central focus of program efforts. Along with this, 4-H curricula that is designed to stimulate interest in exploring hands-on projects, developing life skills, increasing self-esteem, enhancing leadership capacity and shaping positive citizenship is included.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

Each county has at least one Cooperative Extension faculty member supervising the program including the staff hired for 4-H after school programming. New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension has provided the grant writer, contract administrator, and a 4-H Specialist who serves as project director.

Accomplishments and Impacts

Over 1,600 youth, grades K-8th grade, participated in after school programs this past school year. Youth have received a variety of experiential learning opportunities through this after school program. In the area of substance abuse prevention education, one county's program with 3rd-6th graders showed an 8% increase in knowledge about the negative effects of marijuana and hallucinogens. At one of the Pueblo sites, K-2nd grade youth showed a 10% increase in alcohol and tobacco prevention knowledge. In an inner city setting, 5th grade youth showed a 30% increase in knowledge in the areas of decision making, conflict resolution, teamwork, and communication. Six issues of the "Partners in Prevention" newsletter were developed and piloted in one county. These newsletters were sent to parents of children participating in the 4-H after school program and received a positive evaluation. Children had a safe, fun, educational, and stimulating place to go during out of school time. Some sites extended into summer 4-H programs.

Resource Commitment

The program received \$150,000 from the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention and \$100,000 received from New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Collaborators

Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, New Mexico State University Cooperative Extension Service, three Pueblos, Apache and Navajo Reservations, Indian Center in Albuquerque, various community centers, Youth Court, Recreation and Education Council, Extension County Advisory Committees, libraries, schools and 4-H teen and adult leaders.

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To

4-H/Youth Development \
Family Development and Resource Management

Building Effective Schools Together (B.E.S.T.) Community Learning Center

South Dakota

Situation

Rapid City, South Dakota, population 60,000 is located in Pennington County, with one of the highest rates of poverty, indigents, and single parent families in the state. The South Middle School neighborhood looks urban, replete with all of a city's problems—drugs, drive by shootings, and gangs. The paradox is that the school community is rural, since little in South Dakota is urban. Minimum wage jobs are the standard fare for high school graduates in Rapid City.

Program Description

This project is a State Strengthening Community Program funded by the Children, Youth & Families at Risk (CYFAR) Initiative of USDA-CSREES, through the Family and Community Resiliency Project of South Dakota State University Cooperative Extension Service. South Middle School is an economically and racially diverse school. Most of its 700 students live in the immediate neighborhood, compared to the other middle schools in the school district where the majority of the students use bus transportation. Fifty-three percent of South Middle School students come from single parent families. In the area served by South Middle School, there are no recreational facilities, no youth centers, no places for family activities. This program provides a safe and enriching after-school environment for middle school students through its focus on three major goals: (1) To reduce student problem behavior; (2) to develop a character asset-building program to enhance resistance to risky behaviors; and (3) to increase interaction between parents, community, staff and students. After-school and summer programming, provided by South Middle School teachers who receive additional hourly pay provided by this project, includes a choice of learning centers: technology, wellness, homework/tutoring, social, and library media.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

As a partnership between South Middle School and Extension, the Extension Educator represents 0.4 FTE, while the school's educators represent 0.3 FTE. The target audience of middle school students (grades 6-8) participates in the after-school program 3 days per week during the school year, and 5 days per week for one month during the summer. The average daily attendance is 35 to 55 students. This demonstrates that middle school students truly "vote with their feet." The participants are typically not involved with other organized extra-curricular activities. Students have indicated their satisfaction with the program to the County Commissioners. They indicated that what they most liked about the program was having a place to get their homework done, and having things to do besides watching television or "getting into trouble." One parent commented: "It's great! My child loves it! I think the summer program allows 6th graders to become familiar with their new school...It's better than watching television all morning."

Accomplishments and Impacts

Evaluation of the program's accomplishments since it began in October 1997 includes a significant increase in resistance to gang activities, and a dramatic decrease in disciplinary measures for inappropriate behavior. Students report liking school better, doing better in their schoolwork, and having more friends since participating in the program. A revised middle school curriculum of Character Counts! was written by staff. The student Character Counts! acting troupe provides dramatization of the six pillars to elementary schools. Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program surveys show that 75 percent of the students improved their food safety practices.

Resource Commitment

The project has received a 3-year grant from the SD Office of Child Care Services (Department of Social Services) for \$95,000 total, and is applying for other funding to ensure its sustainability. It is under consideration for additional city and federal funding. An extensive amount of in-kind services has been donated.

Collaborators

The project is built on a collaboration model involving school and Extension, community, business, and government. Examples include participation by SD Army/National Guards, which conducted team building exercises, by students from the SD School of Mines and Technology and National American University who provided career exploration activities, by nursing students from South Dakota State University who conducted disaster preparedness exercises, and by nutrition staff with EFNEP who provided training in nutrition. The Extension Educator and the school principal are co-directors of

the project.

Contact Person(s)

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Other Base Program Areas This Program Applies To

Community Resource & Economic Development; Leadership & Volunteer Development; Family Development & Resource Management; Nutrition, Diet and Health; 4-H/Youth Development.

"Focusing on the Middle: 4-H after School Program for 6th, 7th, and 8th Grade Students"

Maryland

Situation

Parkland Middle School is an urban school in southeast Rockville in the Aspen Hill area of Montgomery County. There are more than 1200 students in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. The enrollment is 34.4% Hispanic, 28.6% white, 23.8% African American, 13% Asian and .3% American Indian. The ESL/International student population is at 29% and growing. More than 51% of the students are eligible for free and reduced meals 1999-2000. Parkland ranked last in the county on the Maryland School Performance Assessment Test in 1999 for middle schools and 170 out of 229 middle schools in the state. The school had the infrastructure for an after school program, free bus transportation and snacks, a part-time coordinator, remedial help and sports activities. The Montgomery County 4-H program answered the Parkland call for volunteers and an enrichment program for the students.

Program Description

The 4-H after school program had a three-fold objective: (1) to recruit and mobilize community volunteers, (2) to create and conduct activities with appeal to the age level and (3) to contribute to the cognitive and social growth of the students. Programs were presented after school for one hour and fifteen minutes. Early release and school holidays were used for programs that needed an extended period of time. Weekly programs were presented in healthy life styles, sewing, electricity, woodworking, hobbies and crafts, and baby-sitting.

Stakeholder Satisfaction

One extension specialist and one extension educator each gave approximately .10% FTE to the project. Approximately 175 students participated in a variety of weekly 4-H programs. The "hands-on" 4-H programs reinforced basic education principles and taught important life skills. Students found 4-H activities interesting, challenging, and enjoyable. The 4-H program provided opportunities and achievements for students not involved in other activities. Teachers were amazed with the interest and work of students who displayed little enthusiasm to the school curriculum.

Accomplishments and Impacts

The after school program provided a consistent program and a safe environment with caring adults. The 4-H experiential activities reinforced the school curriculum, developed important leadership skills, self-esteem, increased project and life skills, and introduced wholesome activities for hobbies and fun. An advisory council was formed composed of teachers, community agencies, church, parents, and interested adults and students. The linkage to the faith community, and the school community and volunteers was greatly enhanced by the 4-H connection. One church provided approximately one-half of the thirty-five volunteers in the program. They also provided approximately 200 sweaters, jackets, and coats for refugee children. A fund was created to purchase shoes for students.

The rapport and partnership with the principal and teachers at Parkland provides a strong foundation to expand comprehensive programs to the classroom and after school program for 2000-2001. A group of retired chemical engineers spent the summer designing a science program for after school that will be funded with a grant from their professional organization. Plans with the guidance department will add a career program to the classroom that will culminate with the first career day for the middle school. Coordination with Linkages to Learning will extend the program to include economic and social issues faced by students and their parents.

Resource Commitment

Maryland Cooperative Extension: \$5000 Extension Grant, .10% of two FTE's, 35 volunteers. Millian Memorial United Methodist Church: \$150 for a shoe fund, meeting space, and clothing

Collaborators

Parkland Middle School and ICB Program
Millian Memorial United Methodist Church

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